United Nations E/CN.6/2019/NGO/77

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
26 November 2018

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women
Sixty-third session
11–22 March 2019
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

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The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.

18-20157 (E) 071218

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Statement

Global Citizenship, Social Protection, and the Equality of Women and Men

We are one humanity living in one shared world. As such we are all citizens of that world, citizens with a responsibility for the care of that shared planet and for the wellbeing of each other. As citizens of that world, we also have a responsibility to create systems, laws, and processes, and to take actions that ensure justice, security, peace, and equality for all.

The goal of equality for women and girls has made great strides in the past years. The Progress of the Worlds Women has shared with us that "as of 2014, 143 countries guarantee equality between women and men in their constitutions; 132 have equalized the minimum age of marriage...at 18 years or older, protecting girls from early marriage; at least 119 have passed legislation on domestic violence; and 125 have passed laws to make workplaces and public spaces safer for women by prohibiting sexual harassment" (UN-Women, 2016,, p. 28). And yet as that same report of progress makes clear, we have a long way to go. Again from UN-Women, "Even in countries where gender-equal laws have been put in place, power inequalities between women and men as well as gender stereotypes and discriminatory social norms are deeply embedded" (p. 35).

Yet the introduction of new ideas into old systems can only take us so far. It will not serve to change the deeply embedded norms which lie at the heart of gender-based discrimination and violence. As UN-Women has stated, to "resist this rollback and make it clear that culture and religion cannot be a justification for the violation of rights, alliances between women's rights advocates and other like-minded forces, whether in government or in national and global civil society, are key."

The Coalition for Global Citizenship 2030 (CGC2030) is dedicated to policymaking from a starting point of the oneness of humanity. Beginning discussions at this level affirms our interconnectedness and promotes decision making on the basis of the common good. We call upon policymakers to use a simple test: if effectively implemented, would the policy under consideration be consistent with the reality of the oneness of humanity? Does it help promote justice (often by mitigating injustice)? Does it include all populations? And does it appropriately internalize costs and externalize benefits?

In a well-known analogy, humanity has been likened to a bird with two wings represented by male and female. The bird can only fly when the wings are equal in strength - but also when there is an equitable distribution of resources between the sexes. This will be needed in law and policy, as well as at the level of the community, the neighbourhood, and the family. But the complex dynamics of flight suggest further implications. For humanity to soar, its wings must be coordinated as well as strong. They must be able to act in concert, responding to one another with attention and sensitivity. They must be able to give way or take on burden when circumstances require it. And they must be directed toward the same goal. Otherwise progress will falter.

This is the link between social protection and infrastructure and the empowerment of women. When one half of humanity has been so adversely impacted by social structures and outmoded norms, all of us must come together to find ways to heal that damage. Policymakers must think not only about the fiscal and economic implications of decisions in this regard, but also the social dimensions. How is society remunerating women for the unpaid work they often bear the burden of? How are men increasingly arising to shoulder these responsibilities? What are the policy and

structural barriers before the bird of humanity, and how can they be removed so that our full capacity can be reached?

At the moment, the data is staggering. While known, it may be helpful to articulate a few concerns here: poverty affects women in greater numbers than men; 60 per cent of the world's hungry are women; women make up more than two-thirds of the world's illiterate; only 39 per cent of girls in rural communities will attend secondary school; women continue to earn lower wages for the same work as men; lack of access to clean water results in women spending 40 billion hours a year collecting water; environmental degradations and related climate disasters put women and girls at greater risk than men and boys; lack of sanitation makes women more vulnerable to sexual assault and disease (UN-Women); and in violent conflict women face not only the conventional weapons of war but also the weapon of sexual violence and human trafficking (United Nations Population Fund [UNFPA]). In conflict and consequential displacement, 75 per cent of those in need of humanitarian aid are women and the children in their care (UNFPA). These are the challenges humanity still faces, while women continue to be left out of or underrepresented in decision making and in politically influential leadership roles that are meant to bring about that equality.

If we are all citizens of a shared world, if each state, each civil society organization, each individual stands together committed to thinking, planning, acting from a commitment to equality for all, it is immediately clear that women and girls are an essential part of the solution. Gender equality programming, according to UN-Women, "contributes to improving access to and use of services, increasing the effectiveness of humanitarian outcomes and reducing gender inequalities." More than just the explicit policy itself, the process of policymaking must, therefore, be inclusive of those who it is intended to benefit. Indeed, the measures that are meant to improve the lives of women and girls should not only include them but be led by them.

When we ally, we see each other as equals. When we unite in the common ground of a shared goal or equality, our external differences do not create hierarchies but instead bring richness of ideas and perspectives to the process of finding solutions. Individual strengths are recognized and given space. Collective goals are strengthened by the diversity of voices calling for their fruition. Equality, therefore, is about honouring and giving value to the differences. Similarly, global citizenship, in its reconnection of the interconnectedness of humanity, requires the valuing and honouring of the diversity of contributions to our global society.

Therefore, we call on all States, civil society, and on the private sector to see their place as global citizens and their responsibility to all as such. We call on all these actors then to adopt the perspective that as one human family, we must unite in a spirit of collaborative determinization and commitment to finding inclusive and empowering solutions using a process for developing those solutions that is also inclusive and empowering. We call on all actors to recognize the interconnectedness of our shared humanity and planet. We call on all actors to place equality at the core of their efforts and from that to take true action in bring about a more equal world.

As global citizens who view humanity as one interconnected and yet diverse community, we see equality as a base, a core, and a necessary precondition to having a truly united world. The United Nations and its constituent Member States must share that commitment if it is to succeed for a world where all - women and girls, men and boys - are permitted to reach their full potential.